

Mr. FRIST. Yesterday, I also mentioned the need to act on the pension equity conference report. We would like to lock in agreement for a short period of debate and a vote on the conference report prior to the end of this week. An important piece of legislation, the pension bill had gone to conference; it has come out of conference; it is ready for floor action. I know there are objections to this on the Democratic side at this time. However, I hope we will be able to reach a time agreement this week on this timely conference report as well.

Mr. President, as we look at the medical malpractice and medical liability bill, as we look at FSC/ETI or the JOBS bill, as we look at the pension equity conference report, we have a lot to do over the next 4 days. We have a short amount of time to do it. It is important we stay focused on these important bills for the American people.

I yield the floor.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, there will be a period for the transaction of morning business until 11 a.m., with the first half of the time under the control of the majority leader or his designee and the second half of the time under the control of the Democratic leader or his designee.

The Senator from Utah.

FEAR AND PESSIMISM IN CAMPAIGN POLITICS

Mr. BENNETT. Mr. President, on the 5th of April, the senior Senator from Massachusetts, Senator KENNEDY, appearing before the Brookings Institute, delivered what Larry King described as a blistering attack on the Bush administration. Last night, Larry King and Senator KENNEDY had a conversation about the speech and Senator KENNEDY's comments that is worthy of comment and reaction in the Senate.

First, let me make this observation. Senator KENNEDY earlier in this campaign made personal attacks on the President which I felt compelled to respond to in the Senate.

I am happy to report in his conversations with Larry King, Senator KENNEDY backed away from that degree of personal attack on the President, and I salute him for that. I think it important for us to recognize how much we can get carried away with election-year rhetoric and how personal we can get in our attacks sometimes. I salute Senator KENNEDY, in spite of the vigorousness of his attack on the administration, for his decision to back away from personal attacks on the Presi-

dent. I would hope other members of his party would follow his lead.

We have seen the former Vice President of the United States attack the President of the United States in language reminiscent of that which Joe McCarthy used to use to attack Harry Truman. We should back away from that kind of personal hatred, even though historically it has been part of our election tradition.

There has probably not been a President more personally hated than Franklin Roosevelt in my lifetime. I remember the things that were said about him. I remember the things that were said about Harry Truman. I remember some of the things that were said about Richard Nixon, about Bill Clinton. We should back away from those kinds of personal attacks. Unfortunately, this election year has seen them come back to the point where one could almost say the basis of the campaign against the President is, in fact, personal hatred.

Former Governor Dean certainly went into that direction in his attacks against the President. We have seen Senator KERRY, in an unguarded moment, refer to his opponents as a bunch of lying crooks. I would hope we could back down from hatred as the primary theme of this campaign.

But there is another theme in this campaign which did come out in Senator KENNEDY's speech I would like to respond to and comment on. It is the theme of fear. There is an underlying sense of fear that pervades the rhetoric of the President's opponents here. It is interesting to me, because the founder of the modern Democratic Party, Franklin D. Roosevelt, is perhaps best remembered for his statement in his first inaugural when he said: We have nothing to fear but fear itself.

It would seem in this campaign there are those who have nothing to offer but fear itself—fear and its handmaiden, indeed, its standard derivative, which is pessimism. We have great fear, and we are convinced nothing is going to work. That, if I may, Mr. President, is what pervaded Senator KENNEDY's speech before the Brookings Institute, a conviction that nothing is going to work, that nothing is going to save this country except the personal replacement of the President. But none of the policies the President has put in place can possibly work, and we are in such a terrible morass and difficulty that we live in fear.

I was tempted to go through Senator KENNEDY's speech point by point and rebut it one at a time. I believe I could do that. It would take a great deal of time, and it would probably bore everybody. It is the kind of thing lawyers do in courtrooms where it is essential to build a record. But, as you know, Mr. President, I am unburdened with a legal education. I would like to step back from the point-by-point kind of refutation that would be called for in a courtroom and have an overall view of what Senator KENNEDY was saying. I

refer to him personally, but I think this speech, in fact, is a distillation of the position the Democratic Party will take in the upcoming election. So I think we should step back from the point-by-point situation and look at the overall message of what they are trying to tell us. That is what I would like to address today.

Basically, as I say, it is rooted in fear and its derivative, pessimism. That is what they are offering the American people: fear and pessimism. This is the fundamental position Senator KENNEDY's speech takes: If it is bad, and it happened on President Bush's watch, he is responsible for it. If it is good, and it happened on President Bush's watch, it was coincidence or anybody could have done it, and he does not deserve any of the credit.

Let's go down the history of what has happened on President Bush's watch and see if, in fact, that pattern I have just described did play itself out.

Turn to today's headline where we have a Commission examining what happened prior to 9/11 in the year 2001. Well, we are being told repeatedly it was Bush's fault. He is responsible for 9/11 because he did not do enough to prevent it. 9/11 was his fault. Then the Commission goes on to detail what he did. Basically what he did was what the Clinton administration did. They kept track of al-Qaida. They monitored what was happening. They did their best to find out what was happening, but they did not do enough. In other words, they did not invade Afghanistan.

It is interesting to me that the people who are now saying President Bush did not do enough prior to 9/11 are the same people who are saying he did too much in Iraq. He acted before Iraq became a threat. That is in Senator KENNEDY's speech—he should have waited until Iraq became a threat. But, of course, the same critics are saying he should have acted before al-Qaida became a threat. You cannot have it both ways. Either he was prudent in doing what the Clinton administration did prior to 9/11, and watched the situation carefully to see how it would play out, or he was too timid. And if he was too timid and should have taken more forceful action prior to 9/11, he learned that lesson and took more forceful action with respect to Iraq. You cannot attack him for doing the one in the one situation and then the other in the other; you must be consistent. But the President's critics are not.

As I say, he is responsible for 9/11, according to his critics, because he did basically what the Clinton administration did, but he should have seen it coming and done more. Then when he did do more—that is, when the President led us into Afghanistan—the President's critics were outraged. What did we hear over and over again? Maybe the media has short memories, but I do not. We heard lessons from history: The British went into Afghanistan, they got bogged down, and they